

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor wafer protection structure, comprising a circular semiconductor wafer and a circular protective sheet overlaid on a circuit surface of the circular semiconductor wafer, wherein the circular protective sheet has a larger diameter than ~~the outer~~ an outer diameter of the circular semiconductor wafer.

2. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor wafer protection structure, comprising a circular semiconductor wafer and a circular laminated protective sheet overlaid on a circuit surface of the circular semiconductor wafer, wherein the circular laminated protective sheet comprises a first circular protective layer having substantially the same size as ~~the outer~~ an outer diameter of the circular semiconductor wafer and a second circular protective layer laminated on the first circular protective layer and having an outer diameter that is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the first circular protective layer, and the circular laminated protective sheet is overlaid on the circuit surface via the side of the first circular protective layer.

3. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor wafer protection structure according to claim 1, wherein the circular protective sheet ~~or the laminated protective sheet~~ has a maximum diameter that is larger than the outer diameter of the circular semiconductor wafer by +0.1 to 10 mm.

4. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor wafer protection structure according to claim 2, wherein the first circular protective layer has an outer diameter that is smaller than the outer diameter of the circular semiconductor wafer by -2.0 to 0 mm and the second circular protective layer has an outer diameter that is larger than the outer diameter of the circular semiconductor wafer by +0.1 to +2.0 mm.

5. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor wafer protection structure according to claim 2, wherein the first circular protective layer includes a film having a stress

relaxation rate of at least 40% after 1 minute of 10% elongation, and the second circular protective layer includes a film having a value of Young's modulus x thickness of at least 5.0×10^4 N/m.

6. (Withdrawn) A semiconductor wafer protection method, comprising overlaying a circuit surface of a semiconductor wafer with a protective sheet having a larger diameter than the outer diameter of the semiconductor wafer.

7. (Withdrawn) A semiconductor wafer protection method, comprising overlaying a circuit surface of a semiconductor wafer with a laminated protective sheet, wherein the laminated protective sheet comprises a first protective layer having substantially the same size as the outer diameter of the semiconductor wafer and a second protective layer laminated on the first protective layer and having an outer diameter that is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the first protective layer, and the laminated protective sheet is overlaid on the circuit surface via the side of the first protective layer.

8. (Withdrawn) The semiconductor wafer protection method according to claim 6, wherein the protective sheet or the laminated protective sheet has a maximum diameter that is larger than the outer diameter of the semiconductor wafer by +0.1 to 10 mm.

9. (Withdrawn) The semiconductor wafer protection method according to claim 7, wherein the first protective layer has an outer diameter that is smaller than the outer diameter of the semiconductor wafer by -2.0 to 0 mm and the second protective layer has an outer diameter that is larger than the outer diameter of the semiconductor wafer by +0.1 to +2.0 mm.

10. (Withdrawn) The semiconductor wafer protection method according to claim 7, wherein the first protective layer includes a film having a stress relaxation rate of at least 40% after 1 minute of 10% elongation, and the second protective layer includes a film having a value of Young's modulus x thickness of at least 5.0×10^4 N/m.

11. (Currently Amended) A laminated protective sheet for a circular semiconductor wafer comprising a first circular protective layer and a second circular

protective layer, wherein the second circular protective layer has a larger outer diameter than that of the first circular protective layer.

12. (Currently Amended) The laminated protective sheet for a circular semiconductor wafer according to claim 11, wherein the second circular protective layer has an outer diameter that is larger than the outer diameter of the first circular protective layer by +0.1 to +4.0 mm.

13. (Currently Amended) The laminated protective sheet for a circular semiconductor wafer according to claim 11, wherein the first circular protective layer includes a film having a stress relaxation rate of at least 40% after 1 minute of 10% elongation, and the second circular protective layer includes a film having a value of Young's modulus x thickness of at least 5.0×10^4 N/m.

14. (Withdrawn) A process for processing a semiconductor wafer, comprising a step comprising backgrinding a semiconductor wafer and applying an adhesive sheet to the ground surface while protecting the semiconductor wafer by the semiconductor wafer protection method of claim 6.

15. (Withdrawn) The process for processing a semiconductor wafer according to claim 14, comprising a further step comprising cutting off an outer peripheral portion of the adhesive sheet with a cutter in a manner such that the cutter is moved along an outer peripheral end surface of the protective sheet or the laminated protective sheet.

16. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor wafer protection structure according to claim 2, wherein the ~~protective sheet or the~~ circular laminated protective sheet has a maximum diameter that is larger than the outer diameter of the circular semiconductor wafer by +0.1 to 10 mm.

17. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor wafer protection structure according to claim 4, wherein the first circular protective layer includes a film having a stress relaxation rate of at least 40% after 1 minute of 10% elongation, and the second circular protective layer includes a film having a value of Young's modulus x thickness of at least 5.0×10^4 N/m.

18. (Withdrawn) The semiconductor wafer protection method according to claim 7, wherein the protective sheet or the laminated protective sheet has a maximum diameter that is larger than the outer diameter of the semiconductor wafer by +0.1 to 10 mm.

19. (Withdrawn) The semiconductor wafer protection method according to claim 9, wherein the first protective layer includes a film having a stress relaxation rate of at least 40% after 1 minute of 10% elongation, and the second protective layer includes a film having a value of Young's modulus x thickness of at least 5.0×10^4 N/m.

20. (Currently Amended) The laminated protective sheet for a circular semiconductor wafer according to claim 12, wherein the first circular protective layer includes a film having a stress relaxation rate of at least 40% after 1 minute of 10% elongation, and the second circular protective layer includes a film having a value of Young's modulus x thickness of at least 5.0×10^4 N/m.